



Fall 2007



# planning & building..... *news*

## New California Building Standards Coming

Building safety affects so many aspects of our daily lives and, because of building safety code enforcement, we citizens are safeguarded in the many structures we live and work in over the course of our lives. The California Building Standards Commission has completed adoptions of new building standards and proposed changes that will be effective in 2008.

Keeping up with current practices and technology allows the City to ensure safety in our structures. The improved standards will be included in a complete set of new state building codes, and are based on the latest national and international model building codes. These codes will include the latest technology for construction, residential remodeling, and other buildings regulated by the state. Chula Vista's Building Division will use these new standards as a basis for updated City codes.

The following are some of the changes and additions to building standards:

- Changes for persons with disabilities were adopted to include Federal Department of Justice certification requirements.

- Approval of Chlorinated Polyvinyl Chloride (CPVC) plastic pipe for use in residential water supply piping systems. This type pipe had only been allowed on a limited basis, but has excellent chemical/fire-resistant qualities, can handle both the hot and cold water supply system,



and can be a chemical distribution system where a metal pipe cannot be used.

- New seismic design standards which provide the latest in earthquake safety for the construction of buildings in California.

### Did You Know?

Do you have an inoperable vehicle on your property that you've\been trying to get rid of but can't because you lost the paperwork, or it's too expensive to fix? Is there an inoperable vehicle in your neighborhood creating an eyesore? We can help!

As a public service, Chula Vista's Code Enforcement can arrange to have abandoned vehicles removed from properties absolutely free of charge. This service is made possible through funds received from the State of California's Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Program. Call us and we will take care of all the details. In return, you'll be helping your community by creating cleaner, safer and more beautiful neighborhoods to live in.

- *Abandoned Vehicles in residential neighborhoods or on city streets call Police Department at: (619) 691-5151*
- *Abandoned Vehicles on Private property call Code Enforcement at:*

**OUR MISSION** *is to guide the physical development of the City through the implementation of the General Plan and Building Codes.*

*We are committed to enhancing the quality of life in our community by planning for sound infrastructure and public services, protection of the environment, and promotion of high quality social and economic growth.*



## Congratulations Employee of the Year!



Lead building Inspector John Steen has been chosen as the Planning & Building Department's Employee of the Year, and the City of Chula Vista's Employee of the Month for October 2007. John joined the City in February of 1998 and has 20 years of experience in the construction industry. He holds an Associate Degree in

Construction Inspection and is certified by the International Code Council as a Building, Mechanical, Plumbing and Electrical Inspector. He also teaches construction inspection classes at Southwestern College.

John is a conscientious inspector with strong organizational skills. He has demonstrated his ability by handling inspections for complex construction projects within Chula Vista such as the Otay Ranch Heritage Town Center, the Gateway Commercial/Office complex on H and 3rd, and the Civic Center reconstruction and remodel.

As a Lead Building Inspector, in addition to performing inspections, John is responsible for scheduling the building inspectors daily work assignments, drafting office procedures and code interpretations, overseeing special projects, and conducting in-house training sessions. John is currently the lead on coordinating the in-house training for the Building Inspectors on the new building codes that will take effect on January 1, 2008.

John was formally recognized as the City of Chula Vista Employee of the Month at the City Council meeting on October 2nd. The Council proclamation acknowledges that John has a positive attitude and provides excellent customer service, has contributed greatly to the professional growth of the Building Inspection Section staff, and provides valuable support to the Building Plan Check and Code Enforcement personnel.

## SDSU Intern Passionate about Grass Roots Community Planning

If you enjoy getting information about the Planning and Building Department from this newsletter, much of the credit goes to Damitra Williams, a volunteer student intern from San Diego State University who was with the department since 2006. Her work earned the Department an award from the American Planning Association in 2007 for Best Community Outreach. Unfortunately, as with most interns, Damitra has left the City of Chula Vista to pursue graduate school options. Before she left, the department conducted the following interview to share our insights into this dynamic and motivated young planner.

**Q:** What caused you to volunteer for Planning and Building?



**A:** I was attracted to Chula Vista because it is known as one of the fastest growing cities in the nation and I knew I could learn a lot about planning and development. I was also drawn to how committed the department is to supporting internship programs.

**Q:** Has the experienced lived up to your expectations?

**A:** The employees in the department have treated me so well. Though they are busy they will take time to discuss my progress and welfare. They are encouraging and I'd be very lucky to work here some day.

**Q:** What did you enjoy the most about being a Planning Intern?

**A:** I love working with people. I've always had a diplomatic personality. When it comes to dealing with the community and people and their opinions, I want all to be represented and respected. I remember this quote from one of my planning classes: "A community has to have the capacity to envision a future they want and not just one they are likely to get." I think our job as planners is to support the community in building their capacity to create a better vision.

## A Historic Preservation Program for Chula Vista

On May 22, 2007 the City Council directed staff to proceed with the initial steps of a Historic Preservation Work Program. Completion of this work program in approximately 18 months will result in a permanent historic preservation program that will:

- 1.** Make Chula Vista eligible for recognition as a Certified Local Government by the State of California;
  - 2.** Align with the policies of the Chula Vista General Plan; and,
  - 3.** Be consistent with the recommendations of the 2005 Chula Vista Ad Hoc Historic Preservation Committee and/or accepted practices and guidelines of the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).
- Becoming a Certified Local Government is important because it

will allow the City of Chula Vista to apply for grant funds from a variety of sources to aid in future efforts to preserve the City's past.

In mid-July the City Council appointed an interim/temporary Historic Preservation Advisory Committee (HPAC) to assist City staff with setting up the Historic Preservation Program. The HPAC is comprised of two members of the



public, and one member of each of the standing City boards and commissions relating to planning and development. The City is seeking two additional members with specific backgrounds in historic architecture and/or historic preservation. The HPAC will have a crucial role in making recommendations to the City Council on both the content and structure of the Historic Preservation Program. Upon adoption of the Historic Preservation Program, the HPAC may be replaced with a permanent Historic Preservation Commission.

*To apply for the HPAC or for more information, please contact:  
Lynnette Tessitore-Lopez  
(619) 409-5465 or email at  
[LTessitore-Lopez@ci.chula-vista.ca.us](mailto:LTessitore-Lopez@ci.chula-vista.ca.us)*

## Abandoned Property Registration Program - Dealing With Foreclosures

Loan foreclosures and abandoned homes are disappointing trends every community is currently facing. The media has reported that there have been a significant number of loan foreclosures throughout Chula Vista, especially in the new communities of Eastern Chula Vista. During the housing boom of the past few years, many marginally qualified homebuyers were given loans with Adjustable Rate Mortgages (ARM) whose payments have adjusted upward to the point that owners cannot afford the new payments. Decreasing home prices also make it difficult for homeowners to qualify for a new loan. Not able to make the payments or refinance, owners are defaulting and homes are being abandoned in increasing numbers.

Abandoned homes exhibit

undesirable telltale signs in a neighborhood such as: weeds that grow high enough to cover sidewalks, vandalism, and illegally dumped trash and debris. Some sites become breeding grounds for illegal activity by transients and drug users, and are generally unsafe areas for children. Signs of foreclosures can leave owners of surrounding homes concerned that the market value of their home will be affected. This concern is justified because neighborhood appearance does affect the value of any property. When property owners default on a loan and abandon a home, a lender acquires the home. These lenders are often large out-of-area corporations who neglect the security and maintenance of property while it is resold.

After assessing this abandoned home phenomenon, Code Enforcement officials presented the City Council with a new program designed to protect residential neighborhoods from the negative impacts associated with abandoned properties. The ordinance implementing this program takes effect in October 2007. It requires that lenders with defaulted homes register their properties with the City and maintain them. The name and contact information of a local property management company must be provided.

*To report problems with an abandoned house or get additional information, contact Code Enforcement Officer Susan Giberson at (619) 691-5280.*



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## Message from the Director

**James D. Sandoval, AICP**  
**Director of Planning & Building**

In this issue we highlighted student intern Damitra Williams. She is but one excellent example of the successful partnership between our local universities and the City Of Chula Vista Planning and Building Department. We realize that it is our responsibility to provide you with the very best possible customer service. During times of limited financial resources and continuing high workloads, student interns are a huge help. Our interns, who work for a small stipend, have helped us create this newsletter, develop "E-Zoning" for on-line computer zoning information, do research, and help staff public meetings.

Without their help, many of these important tasks might not be completed. We are truly grateful for their hard work and are hopeful that the experience that they get with the Planning & Building Department helps launch their careers in public service. The following are our current interns, as well as those who have assisted us over the past year:

- **Damitra Williams:** SDSU
- **Ernesto Subia:** SDSU
- **Debra Leiter:** UCSD
- **Ron Gabaldon:** SDSU
- **Ed Zap:** SDSU
- **Mike Duffick:** SDSU
- **Valerie Buenavista:** Southwestern Community College
- **Leilani MyaPe:** SDSU
- **Chau Pham:** SDSU
- **Aaron Drew:** American School, Johanasberg, South Africa
- **Troy Knapp:** SDSU
- **Andres Paniagua:** SDSU
- **Jennifer Godinez:** FIDM
- **Mike Tower:** SDSU
- **Jennifer Arizala:** UCSD



### Browsing on the Web

Visit us at:

[www.chulavistaca.gov/sc/pb](http://www.chulavistaca.gov/sc/pb)

## EVENTS

For time and location of these meetings, please call 619-691-5101.

(The Dates of the meetings are subject to change)

### Monthly Meetings:

1st & 3rd Monday of each month.	Design Review Commission Meeting
2nd & 4rd Wednesday of each month.	Planning Commission Hearings
1st & 3rd Monday of each month.	Resource Conservation Commission Meeting
3rd Thursday of each month.	Chula Vista Redevelopment Corp. Meeting

### Special Events

October 1 - 3	CCAPA Conference
October 18	Concordia Church Neighborhood Meeting
October 24	Citizens Academy
October 25	Historic Preservation Advisory Committee Meeting
No Date	Lower Sweetwater Neighborhood Meeting
October 25	Windstar Neighborhood Meeting

## CONTACT



**Administration** (619) 691-5101

### Building

Main Office	(619) 691-5272
Eastern Office	(619) 409-5868
Permit Information	(619) 476-2332
Code Enforcement	(619) 691-5280
Inspections	(619) 409-5434

**Planning** (619) 691-5101  
Zoning Information (619) 585-5621